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UN Official Praises Wealthy Nations for Disaster Funds

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A senior U.N. official has backed away from earlier comments that wealthy nations had been "stingy" in responding to humanitarian aid appeals.

U.N. Emergency Relief Coordinator Jan Egeland says rich countries have responded generously to requests to help victims of the earthquake and tsunami that swept from South Asia to Africa.

His comments came a day after he appeared to criticize the United States and European countries for what he called being "stingy" with aid contributions.

When U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell was asked about the comment during a cable television news interview Tuesday, he stated flatly, "We are not stingy." He noted that the United States is the world's single largest contributor to international disaster relief, as well as to anti-AIDS and food aid programs.

Mr. Egeland, a Norwegian, told reporters Tuesday that his comments had been misinterpreted.

He has spoken in the past about the donor fatigue many rich countries feel as they receive more and more requests for development aid. He said those comments have nothing to do with the response to this latest emergency.

"The response has so far been overwhelmingly positive," he said. "And the pledges we've had today have been most generous. I've been in contact with a number of donors, European donors, I've been in contact with several friends in the U.S. administration in Washington, and they have pledged very important, substantive support, for which we are very grateful."

Secretary of State Powell Monday pledged an initial \$15 million in U.S. aid, plus logistical support for assistance efforts. A White House spokesman Tuesday said the U.S. Agency for International Development would give another \$20 million, and more would be coming as assessment needs are made.

The United Nations has not yet calculated the amount it will request in its overall earthquake-tsunami aid appeal, but officials say many billions of dollars will be needed to rebuild shattered economies.

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The United States further increased its aid commitment to South and East Asian countries affected by Sunday's earthquake and tsunami disaster to \$35 million. Secretary of State Colin Powell says the ultimate response by donor countries will run into billions of dollars. Assessment teams sent by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) are only now beginning to arrive in the stricken countries. But with the magnitude of the damage becoming clearer,...

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Powell Expects Massive International Response to Tsunami Disaster

U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell says he expects international contributions to countries hit by the earthquake and tsunami disaster to be in the billions of dollars. Mr. Powell, in morning TV interviews Tuesday, rejected a UN official's comment that the response of the United States and other Western nations thus far has been "stingy." The U.S. commitment to relief efforts from the earthquake and tidal

wave disaster thus far is about \$15 million. But officials...

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UNICEF is among the many humanitarian organizations responding to the devastation caused by the weekend tsunami. It has operations in India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and the Maldives. One of the UNICEF workers in India is Lizette Burgers, who is responsible for the agency's water and sanitation program. She's in the coastal area of Tamil Nadu, where more than three thousand people were killed. She spoke by cell phone to English to Africa reporter...

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Africa Assesses Impact of Tsunami

Scores of people have died in tidal waves that hit Africa's eastern coast after Sunday's massive earthquake in southern Asia. In Tanzania, officials say at least 10 swimmers died when they were swept out to sea Sunday near the beach at Dar es Salaam. Police say most of the dead are children. At least two people were killed in the island nation of Seychelles, and several others are reported missing. One tourist was killed in the Kenyan coastal town of Malindi...